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## Bangla Bhai slips into India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Bangla Bhai gave law enforcers the slip making it across the border into India in the early hours Thursday.

Siddique Rahaman alias Bangla Bhai, operations commander of the recently banned Islamist militant outfit Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB), with one of his followers fled the police dragnet and crossed the border somewhere in Naogaon, several JMJB sources told The Daily Star last night.

They, however, could not name the man accompanying Bangla Bhai.

The sources in the JMJB Naogaon unit also said he will return to

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## Train ride turns fatal from lack of repairs

Half the tracks rundown, number of accidents spirals up

PINAKI ROY

More than half of the country's 2,792km railway network has fallen in a state of appalling dilapidation, leading to over 500 accidents a year, making travelling by train a high-risk venture indeed.

At least 1,500km train track is rundown and unsafe. "Except for some important tracks, the condition of most of the lines is really very bad," admitted a high official of Bangladesh Railways (BR).

In just four-year time from 1998-99 to 2001-02, a total of 2,074 train accidents killed 266 people and injured 1,119. Of the casualties, 21 dead and 566 injured people were BR employees.

Of the accidents, 358 happened in 1998-99, 456 in 1999-00, 552 in 2000-01 and 708 accidents in 2001-02, marking a sharp upward curve in frequency. In the last two months -- January and February -- already two people were killed and at least 230 wounded in four train accidents.

Despite the alarming rise in frequency of train accidents, the authorities continue to pay more attention to buying expensive locomotives and coaches than maintaining and repairing the rail tracks, BR sources alleged.

A official of BR engineering department said, "Our main lines are in good condition, but the branch lines are in pretty bad shape." The only good tracks are in the Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Sylhet routes and in Parbatipur. The rest are quite unsafe.

"Several times in the past, the regulatory body warned that the branch railway lines were totally unfit for running trains on. We then proposed a Tk 350 crore project to repair and maintain the tracks, but the government did not attach due priority to the project in the ECNEC [Executive Committee of National Economic Council] meetings," said a top BR official requesting anonymity.

Many of the 454 railway stations across the country are also in decrepit conditions and need urgent repairs. The BR operates 57

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sources said, the authorities did not undertake any appropriate repairing work.

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Govt's mobile phone project faces further uncertainty

STAR REPORT

The fate of the BTTB's (Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board's) mobile phone hangs in the balance despite the assurance of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia that the much-hyped cell phones will be commercially launched by this month.

The project, under which 250,000 GSM (global system for mobile communications) phones are to be initially sold, ran into another snag as its employees threatened to resist moves to hand over the project to a state-owned company.

The project, which is already faced with a number of problems, has missed the deadline for a full-scale launch on several occasions.

The Bangladesh Civil Service (Telecom) Association, a forum of engineers and officers, demanded that the operation of the mobile project be run by the human resources of the BTTB.

A top association leader told The Daily Star they would resist the hand-over of the project to Teleletak, a state-owned company.

"BTTB's engineers and officers will take a hard line if the project is handed over to another company," he said, asking not to be named.

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MR. PRESIDENT & MADAM,  
OUR CELL PHONE IS SO EXCLUSIVE  
THAT WE HAVE ONLY TWO CLIENTS!

 ER HOW DO  
I DIAL IT?

 HELLO,  
HELLO!  
...WRONG  
NUMBER?

SHARIER

## Rights abuse goes up for impunity

Observes Amnesty; concern over spiralling religious militancy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Impunity is one of the major causes of continued human rights violations in the country, said rights activists at a press briefing yesterday following a three-day consultation seminar in the city.

The participants in the seminar from home and abroad also expressed grave concern at the rising tide of violence including

religious militancy and bomb and grenade attacks on political and cultural events.

"Failure to investigate the threats, attacks, killings and bomb and grenade attacks and to bring the culprits to justice under present and previous governments contributed to these incidents," Abbas Faiz, Researcher on South Asia at Amnesty International, London, said.

The participants in the seminar from home and abroad also expressed grave concern at the rising tide of violence including

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Abbas Faiz

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## Bribes get prisoners hospitality at hospital

50 prisoners prolong stay at city hospitals; doctors turn a blind eye

NAIMUL HAQ and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

At least 50 prisoners are enjoying prolonged stays at different city hospitals thanks to special arrangements made allegedly through shady dealings involving physicians both inside and outside jail.

Sources said it has become a commonplace practice for jail physicians to allow prisoners to stay outside the jail hospital. Many of the prisoners continue their stay for months in fact, revelling in a relatively improved diet and certain facilities that would not have been available in prison.

Once the prisoners get out of the

jail hospital in the name of advanced treatment, they attempt to bribe the on-duty doctors at the city hospitals -- in most cases successfully -- to extend their stay outside the jail perimeter.

Mohammad Anis, 25, a leader of a transport operators association (auto-tempo chalak sramik union) in the city's New Market, has spent the last two and a half years in various hospitals for a 'blood disorder'. He has been admitted to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) alone five separate times. He is now under treatment at DMCH's medicine ward no 22.

Anis was arrested for extortion in

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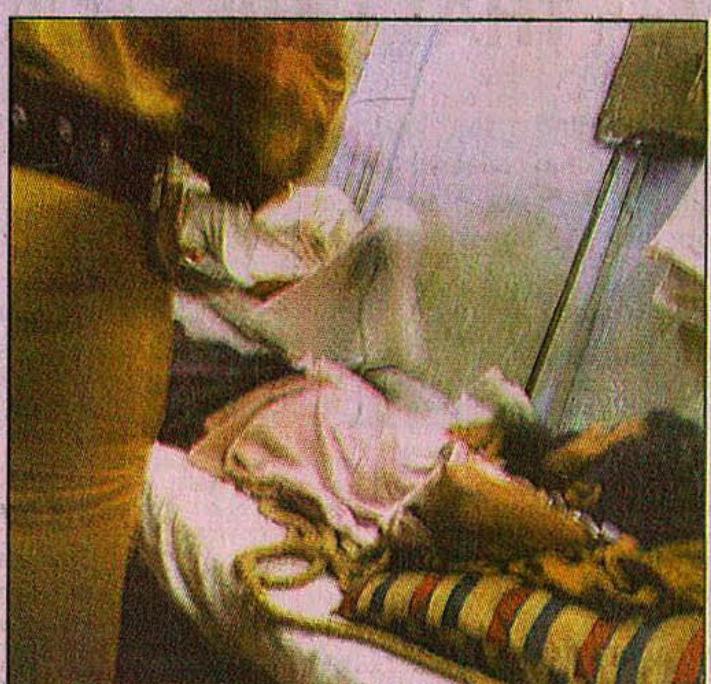


PHOTO: STAR

A prisoner of Dhaka Central Jail lies on a bed at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital yesterday.

AHMADIYYA

Bigots plan to capture Bogra mosque  
March 11

BDNEWS, Rajshahi

Rajshahi branch of the International Khatme Nabuwat Movement Bangladesh (IKNMB) brought out a procession yesterday afternoon demanding of the government to declare the Ahmadiyyas as non-Muslims.

The central leader of the organisation castigated the government at a meeting at Sonadighi crossing prior to the procession.

The speakers announced at the meeting that they would lay siege to Ahmadiyya mosques in Bogra on March 11.

SHARIER KHAN

With the on-going load shedding set to shoot up to 1,000 megawatt (mw) this summer, the country's power situation would also remain bleak for the next few years since the government has failed to implement any major power plant and gas pipeline project in the last three years.

Experts in the Power Development Board (PDB), Power

Cell and power companies say load shedding will shoot even higher in the next couple of years since the government is not taking adequate steps to increase power supply.

"Instead of increasing power generation capacity, the government has cancelled schemes like Sirajganj 450 mw project and the 15 small projects (second time) and Fenchuganj 90 mw project (sixth time). "Even if these projects are not cancelled again, they will not start operation before 2007 at the earliest," said a Power Cell source.

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## Summer holds dark prospect

Power crisis to deepen as no energy project implemented in 3 years

SHARIER KHAN

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Experts in the Power

AL reservation to create political turmoil

Moudud on caretaker govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday said the Awami League's (AL) reservation about the caretaker government system is intended to create political turmoil in the country.

"The caretaker government system was introduced in the constitution on the basis of public opinion. But the constitution cannot be amended just because of an electoral victory or the defeat of a certain political party," he said at a roundtable at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

The roundtable on 'Reform of caretaker government and electoral process: Recent thinking' was organised by Projonoma Academy, a

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Denmark waits on \$250m aid for better governance

UNB, Dhaka

As a grant of \$250 million in development assistance from Denmark is pending, Danish International Development Agency (Danida), like other donors, would like to see improved governance in Bangladesh.

Denmark has expressed serious concern at the deterioration of the governance situation, especially in law and order, political violence...," said Danish Ambassador in Dhaka Niels Severin Munk.

Munk is one of the diplomats attending last month's donors' meeting in Washington, which made a critical reappraisal of the

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আজ পুরুষের অঙ্গীকার  
এসিড নিষ্কেপ নয় আর

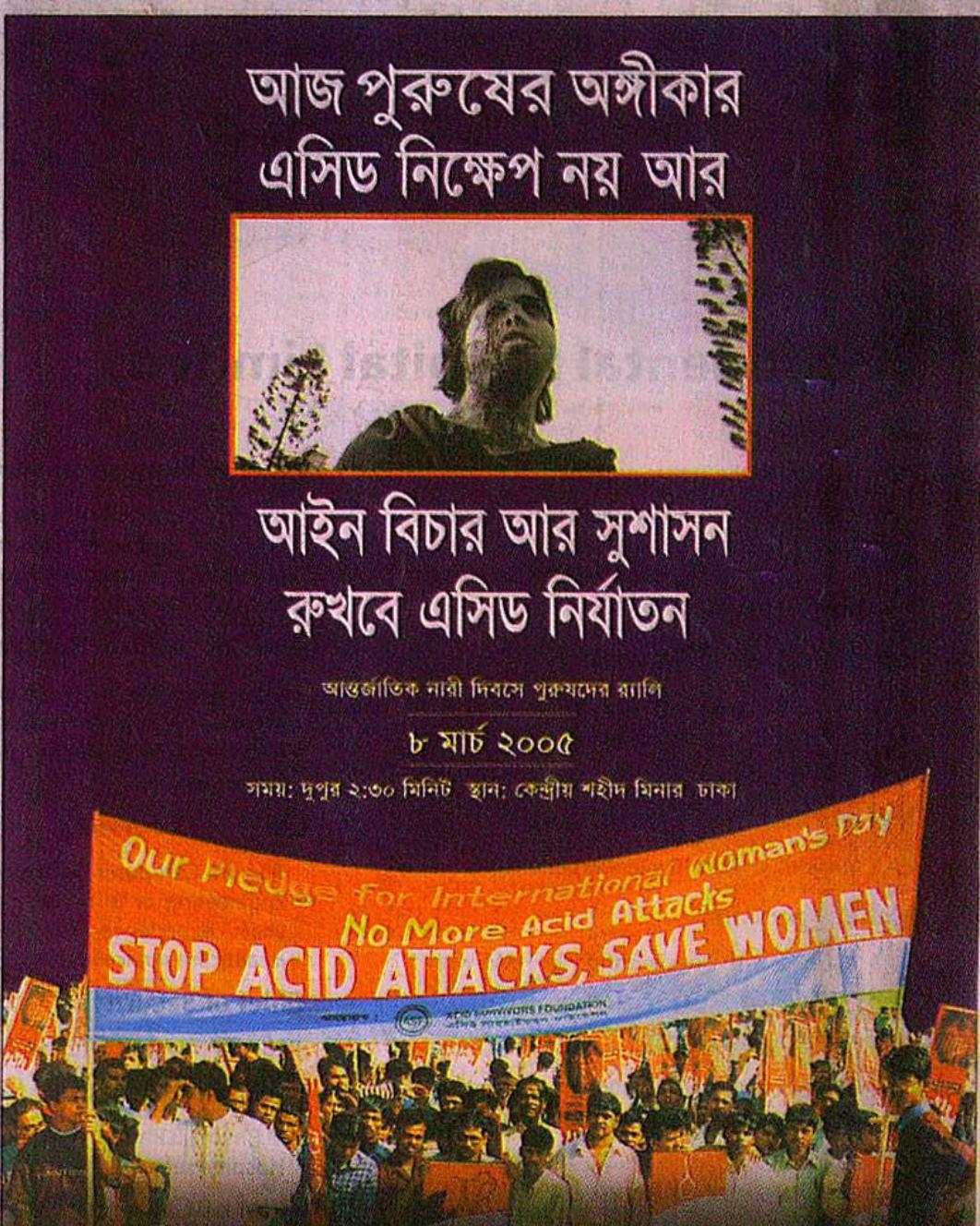


আইন বিচার আর সুশাসন  
রুখে এসিড নির্যাতন

আন্তর্জাতিক নারী নিবন্ধনে পুরুষদের বালি

৮ মার্চ ২০০৫

সময়: দুপুর ২:৩০ মিনিট স্থান: কেন্দ্রীয় শহীদ মিনার, ঢাকা



আয়োজক: ABP

একাধিক সামাজিক প্রতিষ্ঠান সহযোগিতায়

আন্তর্জাতিক নারী নিবন্ধনে

কেন্দ্রীয় শহীদ মিনার

আন্তর্জাতিক নারী নিবন্ধনে

আন্তর্জাতিক ন